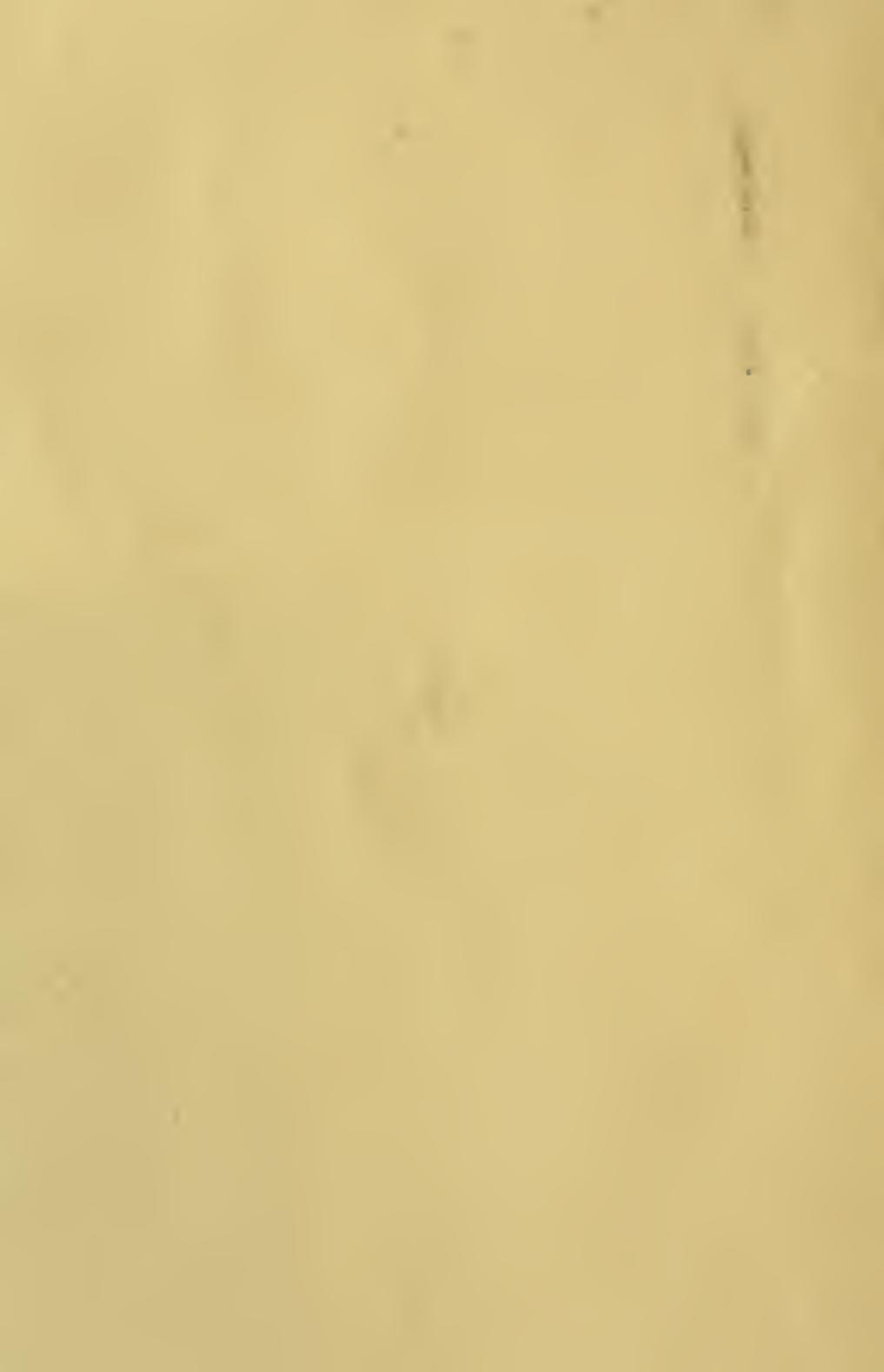


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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

A Historical Drama
In Four Acts



By MARTIN L. D. BUNGE

Co-operative Printery  6th and Chestnut Sts.
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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Lyric Stage Co.

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

A drama in four acts by Martin L. D. Bunge.

CHARACTERS.

JAMES RUTLEDGE, owner of mill and tavern in
New Salem.

MRS. RUTLEDGE, his wife.

ANNIE RUTLEDGE, daughter.

MARY RUTLEDGE, another daughter.

PETER RUTLEDGE, son.

RUTLEDGE'S BABY.

SQUIRE GREEN, justice of peace.

AUNT NANCY, his sister.

JOHN McNEIL, a wealthy young store keeper.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

A. BROWN, a doctor.

N. SMITH, a farmer.

S. MILLER, owner of a sawmill.

ACT FIRST.

Family room in Rutledge's hewn log tavern,
where John McNeil and Abraham Lincoln boarded.

Fire in the fireplace. Mrs. Rutledge is spinning, the father reading the papers, Peter learning, Mary sewing, Lincoln reading a law book. Annie is not present at the beginning of the act, but enters with her baby sister after a few persons have spoken, a pretty girl of twenty.

Father (looking up from his paper): Where is Annie?

Mary and Peter both: Yes, mother, where is Annie?

(Lincoln lifts his eyes from his law books and seems interested.)

Mother: She is dressing the baby for the night.

Annie (entering with the baby in her arms) sings:
Hush, my babe, lie still and slumber *

The lullaby becomes softer and softer, finally dying away.

Annie puts the baby into the cradle during the first stanza of the lullaby, then rocks it, sitting in a chair near her mother before another spinning wheel which she operates just as the occasion permits.

Mother: I suppose the little sister will sleep tight. She did not sleep much during the day.

Annie: What a dearie that little girl is! I love to take her and watch her first smiles. How tiny are the little hands and feet. Everything shows the first stage of human development, and still her blue eyes seem so deep; thoughtfully wondering, as though they were the expression of a meditating soul. They remind me of Woodworth's saying:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;

The soul that rises with us, our life's star,

Has had elsewhere it's setting,

And comes afar.

In these clear eyes nature reflects sun, moon and stars, the rainbow, the flowers, the trees; all that is beautiful in the world and wakes dim presentiments of a great creation of God.

Lincoln: I wish I could set my words as well as you can, Miss Rutledge! And how noble your thoughts are!

Peter: Mother, I wonder if Annie was ever so small as baby sister is now?

Mother: Certainly she was, my boy, and looked like baby sister looks now.

Peter: And now she has grown so big, and can do so many things. She makes me kites, helps me with my lessons, bakes cakes for me, and does many other things for me.

Lincoln (to Peter). I wish I had such a sister!

Mary (eagerly): Yes, and she doctors my dolls, and helps me sewing doll's dresses; she cooks good meals, she knits stockings and darns those that the wild boys tear every day.

Peter: Girls tear stockings, too! Don't you know how quickly she darned yours when you climbed the cherry tree, so that mother should not scold?

Annie: Hush, children! Nobody wants to hear eulogies on me! Save them till I am dead; then it's the proper time for singing all my merits; the funeral day is the proper day for eulogies.

Peter: You shall never die; I won't have it.

Mary: If you die, I would cry till I was dead, too. Then they would bury us two in one grave.

Mother: Don't talk of sad things while we are so happy in our little family circle.

Annie: Only John is not with us. Where may he stay so long? Do you know where he is, Mr. Lincoln?

Lincoln: He has business at the store tonight; but I think he will be here very soon.

Peter: I can't make my arithmetic, Annie. Help me!

Annie: All right, my boy; come here.

Lincoln: No, let him come to me. I shall enjoy helping him.

Peter comes in.

Annie: You are very kind.

Mrs. Rutledge: Mr. Lincoln is so good hearted. I always have the feeling as though he were one of our family.

James Rutledge: I remember when we saw you first, Lincoln. You had your flatboat run up against my dam and had a hard time to get off. In fact, we all thought you could never make it.

Mrs. Rutledge: Yes, it was quite a sight to see you stranded at that mill dam. The whole village watched you. We were all interested to see how you would come out.

Mary: Even Annie, Peter and I watched you almost all the time. We saw then how you transferred your goods from your boat to another that you had borrowed from Johnnie Smith. You rolled the barrels forward and bored a hole in the end projecting over the dam to let out the water that had leaked in. Then you slid over.

Mrs. Rutledge: When you had committed that feat the whole crowd of villagers that had watched you became enthusiastic and cheered all they could. Do you remember to have noticed any one of us?

Lincoln: I saw Annie, I should say Miss Rutledge, standing on the shore, waving her kerchief from the bank, cheering the stranger. I could never forget the picture!

Annie: (somewhat embarrassed): I wish Johnnie would come home!

Lincoln (aside, as if absent-minded): That picture has ever been before my soul. That is the magnet that drew me to New Salem.

Mrs. Rutledge: Do you still have a mother living, Mr. Lincoln?

Lincoln: My own mother was buried in the wilderness when I was nine years old. I remember the day of her death. We were called to her bedside in the rude log cabin. She laid her hand on my head and said: "Be good and kind!" The next day we were all alone without a mother. As there was no undertaker in the wilderness her funeral was very plain. Father cut the lumber for her coffin with a whipsaw and nailed it himself. Then we buried her in the forest all alone.

Mrs. Rutledge: Your life must have been a very hard one.

Lincoln: Yes, and the stamp of hard labor and all kinds of struggles can be traced in my rugged face, while your daughter Annie looks as though not an hour of privation or sorrow had touched her sunny nature.

Annie: It is true my life has been smooth and even. Under the protection of my good father and dear mother, surrounded by beautiful nature, I have learned to know neither want nor disappointment. Life seems pure sunshine—all joy. Of course, I have my work. Ours is quite a family, as you know. There is washing, ironing, cleaning, cooking, baking, sewing, knitting, darning, patching, spinning—work without end. But I enjoy my work, and find even time enough for study. I am so glad you let me have that grammar. I have learned almost all in it. Mentor Graham is also teaching me. My dear betrothed, John McNeil, has so little time. Else he would teach me; and I would enjoy so much being taught by him. He is so wise.

Peter: I want some bread, Annie!

Annie: Say please, little man, and give me a good brother's kiss. Then you shall have some.

Peter says "please" and kisses her.

Lincoln: I wish I were your brother!

Annie: Why? Do you want some bread? You may have some.

Mary: Give me some, please.

Annie, Mary and Peter leave the room, the two younger playfully teasing the big sister.

James Rutledge: Let us have a game of checkers, Lincoln. It is not good for you to sit over these law books all the time. Law makes a man callous for the natural promptings of his soul.

Lincoln. That depends a good deal on whether a man takes a formal aspect or looks at the practical side of it; whether he looks at it with a selfish mind or a feeling, loving soul. For a man that is bound to be of benefit not merely to himself, but to all mankind, everything, even the study of law, is a source of exaltation. But I may pause a little. Take your pipe, and while you smoke we shall talk about our time and its needs; you have read the St. Louis paper and may tell of what is going on in the world.

While James Rutledge prepares his pipe, Annie and her sister and brother re-enter. Peter and Mary go to a corner of the room with their bread, while Annie gets some yarn and says:

Annie: Who will hold some yarn for me?

Lincoln: Let me do it, Miss Rutledge, while your father and I speak of politics.

(Lincoln takes the yarn, and while Annie is winding it, tries to play some little tricks with his clumsy fingers, holding the thread back, etc., against which Annie laughingly remonstrates.)

James Rutledge: Talking of politics is not very pleasant, my dear Lincoln. Nothing but the slave question is written and spoken of. You shall see, we shall have a civil war about this damnable thing,

sooner or later. This slave institution is a curse for a civilized nation.

Lincoln (with great earnestness and fervor): Certainly, my dear Rutledge, it is a great curse. I tell you when I saw slavery first, I became stung by it to that degree, that since then I am thinking and ruminating what I might do to fight it. I shall be up against it one day, as the time when you saw me first run up against your mill dam. I had never seen anything of this abomination. But on that trip I came to New Orleans, and there we witnessed horrible scenes in the slave market. We saw negroes in chains, whipped and scourged. One morning I saw an auction going on; a young, decent looking mulatto girl, vigorous and comely, was being sold; against her entreaties and protestations she had to undergo one examination after the other at the hands of heartless bidders, who pinched her flesh, made her trot up and down the room like a horse to show how she moved. The thing was so revolting to me that slavery ran the iron in me right then and there. "Boys," said I to my companions, "By God, let's get away from this; but if I ever get a chance to hit that thing I'll hit it hard."

Peter: There is someone at the door. I'll bet John is coming home

Annie (blushing): Go quickly, open the door, that he might have some light in the entrance.

(When John McNeil enters, Annie meets him with a face radiant for joy, stretching out both her hands. John shakes hands all around. Lincoln bids him very heartily welcome. They meet like good friends.)

Annie (drawing her betrothed to the door): Come into the kitchen and have a cup of tea. That will warm you up.

(Both go out.)

Lincoln: I am sorry I spoke of such a sad theme when Miss Annie was here. Her pure mind should not be troubled with so sad a picture. But

every time I think or hear of slavery my fervor runs off with me.

James Rutledge: Be at ease, my friend Abe. That was not the first time she heard of it. I have often spoken of it in the family circle, as I have grown up among the cruel pictures of slavery, being born in Kentucky.

(To McNeil, who re-enters with Annie.)

We are just speaking of slavery, John.

John McNeil. You better stop speaking of it. It's a nasty theme. I do not like to hear of it. It's anyhow not of our concern. If the Southerners want slaves, let them have them. What is that to us? We have no slaves, consequently no slave question. Let the South alone, then they will let us alone.

Lincoln: There I differ with you, John. This thing concerns all of us. Are we not one nation? Are we not brothers? Should we tolerate our brothers to taint themselves with this crime? You shall see, my dear John, there never will be peace, never be true union, never a sound basis for prosperity, until we have abolished this abominable institution of slavery.

J. Rutledge: I agree with Lincoln, and I know what I am speaking of. I have had my experience. Slavery was the reason for my leaving my old home. It was as though God spake to me as he spoke to Abraham in olden times: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee; and I will bless thee and thou shalt be a blessing." But it is a sad story.

Annie (caressing him): You must not tell it, father, it will make you sad.

J. Rutledge: I shall tell it to Lincoln, as he is very much interested in the subject.

A. Lincoln: Who should not be interested in a question that is of so vital an influence on our present age?

John McNeil: Well, I am not. Come, Annie, let's go into the other room and have a game of checkers.

(The mother, with Annie's help, moves the cradle into the sleeping room. Then retires with the children. Annie and John go into another room. So James Rutledge and Lincoln are left alone.)

James Rutledge. Yes, you shall hear my story, my dear Abe. You see, my father used to be a well-to-do planter, so we had many slaves working for us. Among them there was a young mulatto girl, who was almost white and very pretty. She had been educated at a convent, and father bought her to have a nurse and, later on, a teacher for me, as my mother died when I was born. So she was with me from my babyhood—being sixteen at the time my father bought her—till I was seventeen. She loved me like a mother, and I loved her as a son. She was so good and taught me so many noble things that I could not help but love her more than anybody in the world, even more than my father. For all my willfulness and many tricks she had only kindness and firm but loving guidance. When I was seventeen a gentleman friend of my father saw her, and began to follow her with a vile and lustful passion that he called love. He offered my father a great sum for her. But I implored my father not to sell her, so he refused, though his circumstances had become more and more straitened from year to year, as he was a gambler. But this man, knowing my father's weakness for hazard games, made his plans accordingly. And there came a night when my father had lost all till up to my dear teacher, and then set her up against five thousand dollars on one card. He lost and soon after committed suicide, as he could not survive his beggarnom. I shall never forget the morning when this rascal, who had ruined

my father, seized my dear teacher, tied her and threw her into his wagon as his property. I shall never forget her cries, her face full of anguish, her entreaties, her prayers that were never heard. That day I swore I would get out of the territory of slavery and never set my foot there again. And God has blessed me here. I have gained here by my own work all my father had lost, in spite of others working for him.

Lincoln: It must be terrible to live among slave-holders.

James Rutledge: Yes, it is deteriorating to character.

Lincoln: I am glad your children have not grown up in such surroundings. I don't think Annie would be what she is had she grown up there.

J. Rutledge: You are taking great interest in Annie, Lincoln. By God, I wish she had preferred you to this superficial John.

Lincoln (confused): Do not misunderstand me, my dear James. John is one of my best friends, and I envy him nothing. The thought of jealousy never entered my mind. My feelings toward Annie are more those of a good brother or friend than those of a lover. You see, my life has been a hard one. The woman that I have loved during my life, my mother, my stepmother, my sister, have gone to early, forlorn graves, after having suffered many a hardship. Now Annie's undisturbed serenity and peace fills my heart with high ideals, with unspeakable joy and gives me a certain poise. The thought to possess her never occurs to me, but I feel such an ease and comfort when she is around. There is one thought predominating in me in regard to her and that is: May her life be always happy and no disappointment ever come to her; may she be blessed forever.

James Rutledge (pressing his hand): You are a good fellow! Good-night. I am sleepy.

Lincoln: Good-night!

(Just then Annie and her lover enter.)

Annie: Are you going to bed, father?

Rutledge. Yes, my girl, and you had better follow my example.

Annie: Yes, I shall do so! Good-night, father! Good-night, gentlemen!

All: Good-night.

(Rutledge and Annie retire. Lincoln and John remain.)

John: Well, Abe, how do you feel to-night? You are looking so sober. Has the slave question roused your mind or is there some love trouble?

Lincoln: There is nothing at all. You know I am not much of a gay fellow. I am most of the time ruminating.

John: I believe you have something else on your mind. Say, do you know what I have found out? You are in love with my girl. I saw your eyes follow her so intently to-night. I suppose you love her and hate me for having forestalled you. This is quite a joke.

Lincoln: Don't talk nonsense.

John: No, I know what I know, I have my eyes. But I tell you. If you want her I shall retreat. There are lots of pretty girls around here.

Lincoln: John, you ought to be ashamed to speak thus of the maiden that has given to you her virgin heart and has put in you all her confidence and all the love that there is in a young, sound girl of twenty; seeing in you her ideal; hoping from you fulfillment of all she expects of life. I tell you, John, I take some interest in her, the interest of a friend. And I expect, yes, I demand, of you to make her happy, really happy. Do you hear me, John, really happy. You shall watch over her that

no storm ever crushes her courage, no frost chills her love. Do you hear, John?

John: Hush, don't get agitated! I was only joking. Who tells you I might disappoint her? I mean well with her. Of course, I like to be independent. I am for independence, just as you are for union, always talking the states ought to remain united. Isn't that a good joke? We two represent independence and union. Isn't that a good one? Hah, hah, hah! Well, good night!

Lincoln: Good night, John.

Remaining alone, he walks restlessly up and down, stirs up the fire, sitting before it meditating. Then stands erect as absent-minded. Abruptly the following words come from him:

A girl like her would stand no disappointment. She would die of it. What did Rutledge say? Love? Is that love? Yes, but there are different kinds of love, very many different kinds. Two main classes are: Selfish, so-called love, which is bound to possess, to enjoy, and selfless real love, which is bound to serve, to bless. Should I think of such a happiness as living in closest union with such a maiden? No, such happiness is not for me. If I could only stay near her all my life and watch her like a faithful watchdog watches a baby. Might I have the power to keep those lips always smiling, those eyes always sparkling; to keep all sorrow, all grief, all disappointment from her; to bless her all the time. That would be happiness enough. My life's mission is to give, not to take, love.

ACT TWO.

Family room on Rutledge's farm, whither he has moved after having sold mill and tavern. Mrs. Rutledge sits knitting while her husband restlessly paces up and down the room.

Mrs. Rutledge: Come James, sit down. Smoke your pipe and read the paper; or let us have a little friendly chat. Don't walk around that way! What is the matter? What is vexing you? Is the bay horse still lame?

James Rutledge: Bosh! The bay horse! Did you ever, in the long time that we have been married, see me worried and restless on account of such a trifle? But Annie! Our daughter, our darling! Don't you notice how she is waning away, day by day, worrying and worrying over her faithless lover?

Mrs. Rutledge: Certainly, my dear James. I noticed it long ago. Do you think a mother is blinder than a father. But I try to keep up spirits as best I can. For if we also give way, who shall cheer her up. Many a sleepless night have I been lying and ruminating and speculating what I might do to keep her mind from the thing that makes her so miserable. I asked her the other day to visit Squire Green for a while. You know he is such a jovial old fellow, and his sister, Aunt Nancy, as we all are used to calling her. She is so talkative. And then, Mr. Lincoln, our postmaster and surveyor boards there. He is such a good fellow, he would certainly have a wholesome influence upon her. But she declines. She says she must be busy sewing her linen, as John might come any day to marry her. She still believes in him, after all that happened. He told her his real name was not McNeil, but McNamar. Does not that look rather suspicious. And now he has neglected her. When he left her little fingers were busy procuring

for him what might be of comfort to him on the road. Tears fell on her work. With tears in her eyes she accompanied him a little piece of way. Tears fell on the letters she used to write daily. Did he answer? Once or twice. And what was in his letters you could see in her face when she was reading them. Think of all the nights the poor girl has cried in her bed. Think of all the anxiety, the disappointed hopes. And still she believes in him. And still she expects his return every day. She is so wrapped up in that love as if it were the only stronghold her young life had to cling to.

James Rutledge: I can hardly understand it. Such a pretty, such a good girl, and so neglected!

Mrs. Rutledge; There are many who would highly cherish what this Mr. McNeil, or McNamar, whatever his real name might be, disregards.

James Rutledge: Now there is, before all others, Mr. Lincoln. He is such a noble, good-hearted, reliable fellow. He is poor, it is true, but he has high aims, and I will bet anything that he will come to something one of these days. I often had talks with him on deep subjects when he boarded with us in the tavern, and found that he is an extraordinary man. I should not wonder if he would be one of the greatest men in this country some day. But she does not take to him. They are good friends. Both have that longing for knowledge, and they study together. But aside from that she has eyes for no man but this McNamar.

Mrs. Rutledge: Well, you see, James, if Lincoln had been with us before this McNamar came, it might have been different. But as it was, McNamar, or as we called him then, McNeil, was the first man that struck her untouched, virgin heart with that pleasing sentiment that captivates a maiden's heart. So he had the benefit of all the unsuspecting, implicit confidence, of all the pure love, all the fluttering hope that lingers in a sev-

enteen-year-old girl. Believing to see personified in him all her great ideals, she looked at him with eyes that were blind to all defects, and the radiance of a girl's first love thrown around all his acts and words, made him appear quite a hero—made him her idol.

James Rutledge: You are quite a philosopher, my good wife. Where did you find all these deep thoughts? Were you reading books lately?

Mrs. Rutledge: Go with your books. My life is a book. My troubles make me philosophize as well as my joys. I tell you, since our girl has had this great disappointment I have meditated over many things I have never thought of before. But Annie is coming. Be careful what you say, James. You know she is very sore, very sensitive of late.

James Rutledge: I know, but I shall learn the truth! I am her father. I must protect my girl.

Annie (enters, traces of tears in her eyes): Is there a letter for me, father?

James Rutledge: Not yet, my dear Annie.

Annie. May I take the buggy and go to the postoffice, father?

James Rutledge: That would be useless. You know Lincoln is surveying at the present time, and he generally brings the mail around when passing by. Especially in case you would have a letter from John, he would not be slow in bringing it. You know how great an interest he is taking in you.

Annie: Yes, Mr. Lincoln has always been very kind to me, very kind, almost like a brother. He lends me books, he advises my studies, he does me all kinds of favors, never expecting anything in return. I never met such a kind man before in my life, besides you, father. If he had not consoled me during the time John is gone, I don't know how I could have stood it. When there came no

letter for six months and I was at the postoffice every time the train came in, he, seeing the anxiety in my face, spoke so friendly to me, telling me of all kinds of possibilities how a letter might have been lost, or how John could have been prevented from writing. And when the people in the village began to slander John, learning that he had changed his name and that he neglected me, as it seemed to them, Lincoln nobly defended his friend.

James Rutledge: He is certainly a far better man than this McNamar.

Annie: Please, father, don't say anything against John. He is so good. We don't know what prevents him from coming and writing. If he could, he would come at once and marry me. Perhaps he has found sorrow at home, and his love for his poor parents makes him stay longer than he intended to do. What was it besides his good heart that induced him to leave me and to look after his parents, whom he knew to be in utter destitution. There are many sons neglecting their parents. Not so John. As soon as he had gathered some money by his industry and thrift, he felt, as though he ought to share his good fortune with those whom he owed so much. I know how hard it was for him to leave me, but his filial duty made him part in spite of his great love for me.

James Rutledge: Do you still believe in his love, Annie? I don't want to hurt you. But it is better for you to see clearly, otherwise the disappointment might be too sudden and the more unbearable, as you are not prepared. Think of all that happened since he left. Compare all his acts with what you naturally expected him to do and ask yourself clearly and without bias whether or not he is deserving of your love.

Mrs. Rutledge: There comes Aunt Nancy.

Aunt Nancy (entering): Good afternoon to all of you.

All: Good afternoon.

Aunt Nancy: Well, how are all of you? Isn't this a nasty day? Oh, my goodness! I am sure a storm is coming up. But I could not refrain from peeping in and seeing what my dear Annie is doing. I hear so much about her all over town. They all say she is sick on account of her faithless lover. Oh, my goodness!

Annie: Hush, Auntie, don't tell me what the people in the village are saying. I am not interested in it. I wish they might not be concerned about my purely personal affairs.

Aunt Nancy: But, I don't care, it's a shame. How this man acts! No matter what you are saying, the people are right. Oh, my goodness, such a man. He is a suspicious character. Why would he change his name if he had not some reason for it? Some say, he escaped from state prison, all say he is either a thief or a murderer. Some claim he has a wife and children in New York.

Annie: Stop; not another word against him! Nobody shall speak ill of my dear John, my noble lover. Nobody of these vile slanderers in town knows anything more of him than I do. All they say is only vague rumor and entirely ungrounded. He had good reasons for changing his name. He did not want his people to come here before he was ready to receive them. Nobody but I knows how good this young man is, and how much he loves me.

Aunt Nancy: There is Lincoln coming over the farm yard. He will have the desired letter for my good little girl, perhaps a letter that will clear her mind in regard to this man. Oh, the men! Oh, my goodness! They are bad creatures. Present company is always excepted, Mr. Rutledge.

(Lincoln enters.)

Lincoln: Good afternoon! I have a letter for Miss Rutledge.

(He hands her the letter, sees her open it, her color leave her face, and then run out into the garden.)

Lincoln: She wants to be alone with her grief.

(A storm is coming up, it's getting dark in the room.)

Aunt Nancy: Hear how the wind blows, would it not be better to call her in?

Mrs. Rutledge: Leave her alone! The storm in nature harmonizes with the storm within her soul. When our blood gets tumultuous and is rushing through our veins like in a fever, we are better in a storm than in a quiet. Let her fight her battle! It is hard for a woman to see herself slighted.

Aunt Nancy (eagerly): Yes, I know what it is; I have had my experiences. Oh, the men! the bad men! Oh, my goodness! It's a bad lot. Present company is excepted, Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Rutledge. You are exceptional men, both of you. But if I should tell you all I know of men folks, you would be surprised, really surprised. I am selecting my words with great care. But this rascal beats anything I have ever heard of. Don't you believe that this man has escaped from prison and has a wife and children somewhere, Mr. Lincoln?

Lincoln: Do not believe such a nonsense, Aunt Nancy!! I, for my part do not believe it. He always appeared to be an honorable man. We have no proof of the contrary; these rumors are absolutely without any essence. We will not believe bad of him before fully persuaded by clear evidence. There is only one thing I can not comprehend, that is: how can he neglect a girl like Annie. She has now been betrothed to him for four years, the best part of her youth has been wrapped up in this man, and now he seems to slight her. That I can not understand. But we must not judge before we know all the truth.

James Rutledge: Did you watch her face when she read the letter, mother?

Mrs. Rutledge: Yes, it must be a bad one, it will be the death blow to her love. She looked as in despair.

Aunt Nancy: The rascal! Oh, my goodness! What a man!

James Rutledge: I wish those thousand miles of wilderness would not stand between me and New York. I would go there; I would demand my dear girl's lost happiness from the hands of the scoundrel. I should shoot him if he failed to give satisfaction; what right had he to enter our peaceful life and tear the best blossom from my family tree and after having played with it for a while throwing it carelessly away, not caring whether or not it will die of it.

(The wind becomes stronger and stronger.)

Lincoln: I can not think of Annie being out there all alone in the storm. I shall try to find her and bring her home and to herself.

Mrs. Rutledge: Yes, please do so!

(Lincoln goes out. There is a short silence. The people in the room are listening to the wind, till Aunt Nancy breaks the silence.)

Aunt Nancy: There goes a fine fellow! What a blessing it would be if Annie could take to him! I know he loves her dearly. And he is such an exceptional man! Everybody says he is so kind and generous. But that's the way the girls are nowadays: instead of looking after a man whose character would guarantee a happy life, they rather look after a smooth face that will soon get wrinkled by vices. It was otherwise with me. I could have hundreds of men if I would have been satisfied with a smooth face. But I had made up my mind to take only a good character, a model man. But they are so rare. I did not find one. But Annie had the opportunity of marrying a really exceptional man. But having to choose between a smooth face and a good character, she chose the smooth face.

Mrs. Rutledge. I fear you misunderstood both Mr. McNamar and Annie; and then you forget that John McNamar had already captivated her heart when she became acquainted with Mr. Lincoln. McNamar is certainly not as bad as people make him, but he is thoughtless and inconsiderate. I am certain that he would act otherwise if he had the slightest idea of what is going on in Annie's heart.

James Rutledge: I always have known him to be a very superficial character. I could never get him to talk about deeper subjects. But he could say pretty phrases which Annie must have taken for something wise interpreting his words with a heart full of love.

Aunt Nancy: They are coming back!

(Lincoln and Annie enter the room. She is sobbing; he tries to console.)

James Rutledge (taking his daughter in his arms): Now, my girl, tell me the truth, let me bear it with you? Is it over with your and John's love?

Annie: It is all over with his, all over.

Aunt Nancy: That nasty, ugly, mendacious monster!

Annie: Don't, Aunt; don't speak bad of him. He is good. He can not help it if he can't love me any more. The defect must be in me. There was not enough in me to keep his heart in love any longer time than four years. What could he see in a plain girl like myself, anyhow? Now, when he got to New York and saw the fine ladies, he could not help noticing the mistake he had made. Could he restrain his feelings when they were changed in him in spite of his good will? It is only honest in him to say outright what is in him rather than to disimulate a love that he does not feel any more, and by doing so bring final disaster over us? Oh, that he had never gone to New York, where there are so many fine ladies!—He still loved me when I said "good-bye" to him.—I wonder whether he appre-

ciated the little tokens of love I worked for him and put into his saddle bag? I wonder if he thought of me on his way? I wonder when it was that his heart changed? My love for him has never ceased. From now I shall wander around a spectre and joyless. Life has nothing in store for me any more.

James Rutledge: He is a scoundrel. I shall break his head one day!

Lincoln: I can not understand him.

Aunt Nancy. I must tell my brother about it.

Annie: Please, tell nobody about it! I do not want any more gossip about my private affairs than there is already.

Auntie: I must go home! Good-bye, Annie (affectionately kissing her). Good-bye, my dear one! I understand you, if nobody does, my dear, poor, deserted girl! Now you know how men are. Trust no one except Mr. Green, Mr. Lincoln, and your father! Those three are exceptional men.

Mr. and Mrs. Rutledge accompany her out of the room and remain outside. Lincoln and Annie are alone in the room.

Lincoln: Miss Rutledge, will you please, permit me to tell you that I am deeply grieved, feeling that one of my friends has caused you such a sorrow.

Annie: He was your friend; then you know that he was not so bad as the people make him.

Lincoln: Do not think of what the people are saying. Let us try to find the balance between the good that was in him and what he lacked, between what we expected of him and what he really did; then let us lay this unlucky balance to unforeseen circumstances, uncontrollable influences and surroundings. Let us then try to forget the episode and begin life anew!

Annie: I can not forget those four years. How much happiness did they give me! From this happiness I shall nourish my life's joy.

Lincoln: Miss Annie, I have felt for you like a brother since the day I first saw you standing on

the shore of the Sangamon River. In an hour like this it may be a balm to your wounded pride to know that I appreciate what John disregarded, and that my heart thinks of nothing but of how I can help you bear the great sorrow that has come over you. I know your heart is not free, it is under the bonds of a great sadness. Our aim must be to free your heart. Only when the bonds of the slighted love have been taken off, only then you will be free for a development of new life. Now I ask you, let me help you to free your heart. Let me be your liberator!

Annie: You noble, great man! You have always given, never taken. You are offering your heart, knowing that I have no heart to give in return. Let me thank you from my innermost for your selfless kindness! Your words begin to give back to me self-respect. To know a generous heart caring for me is balm for my wounded heart. But it is very sore within me. I have to abide the time. During this time be my helpful big brother, will you?

Lincoln: Miss Annie, I shall never cease to take care of you. Now, before I go, I ask one promise: Pledge yourself not to give way to brooding. Try all you can to divert your thoughts. Your house-work is something; but do more: take up your old studies, and let me study with you. Let me come up to you as long as I shall be here, and when I shall have been gone to Vandalia to serve in the legislature, we shall write to each other about our studies. Thus leading your thoughts out of the bonds of sorrow to the open sphere of science, you will be more and more liberated. Promise!

Annie: I promise.

Lincoln: Good-bye!

Annie: Good-bye!

(Lincoln goes.)

Annie (alone): He is the man to liberate my soul. Has he not freed the minds of the many men here from the bonds of superstition, or sorrow, or vice? Blessed be the liberator!

THIRD ACT.

Mrs. Rutledge's garden in the spring. James Rutledge, Mrs. Rutledge, their children, Squire Green, Aunt Nancy.

Squire Green: This is a fine day. It makes a person feel like making poems.

Peter: Ah, uncle Green, could you make poems? I thought you were too old for that. How could you do it?

Squire Green: Nothing is easier than that. I shall just look around in your garden and take all the things I see, and describe them in fine poetical language. There is a blooming apple tree, spring flowers, singing birds, the river Sangamon in a distance, freed from winter's ice; and there is your sister Annie, a beautiful goddess of spring, also freed from the ice, the ice of sorrow.

Annie: There is right and wrong in what you are saying.

Squire Green: How so?

Annie: It is wrong to call me a goddess. I do not see anything nice in being one. I am rather a plain child of nature. But what you are saying about being freed from the ice of sorrow is true. Really, father, (turning to Mr. Rutledge) I feel as though this spring has brought along a new spring of life for my young life. This morning, hanging the cloth, seeing myself surrounded by new born nature, I felt the new life that throbbed through nature also pulsating in my own veins. The budding and blossoming, the humming bees and fluttering butterflies, the birds building their nests singing love songs, and even the cat licking the warm sunshine from her paw, all seemed to call out to me: The winter is gone, nature is free from the bonds

of cold and rigid winter; now you also shall be free. New sunshine, new life, new happiness shall come over you!

Aunt Nancy: You are well looking, my girl! It's the same face I see before me that I saw when you were seventeen; only a little wiser; yes, we have to get wise about these men folks. Oh, my goodness, this McNeil!

Annie: Hush, do not spoil this beautiful spring afternoon by sad remembrances!

Mr. Rutledge: That is right! Do not let us speak of bygone times! Let us look forward into a happy future!

Mrs. Rutledge: Somebody comes home today—guess who, Aunt Nancy?

Aunt Nancy: I knew it long before you, if you are referring to the Honorable Mr. Lincoln, assemblyman of our district. He is going to board with us, and he is staying all summer. I thought I would bring this news to you as a surprise. How did you get to know it?

Mrs. Rutledge: Annie was corresponding with him during the last two years.

Aunt Nancy: But I know more than you know.

Mrs. Rutledge. What is it?

Aunt Nancy: Guess?

Mrs. Rutledge: I am a poor guesser, tell me!

Aunt Nancy: He is here already. He is at our house. He said, after he had rested and dressed up a little, he would come over.

Peter and Mary: Hurrah, uncle Lincoln is here! Hurrah!

Squire Green: I wonder for whom he is dressing up, we are all plain people around here.

Aunt Nancy: You know how he looked when he came on horseback. Did you expect him to come here with his blue pantaloons sticking in his high boots?

(In the distance a voice is heard singing the "Annie Laurie," the tone becoming stronger and stronger as the singer approaches.)

(Lincoln appears, shakes hands with all, and is heartily greeted in return.)

James Rutledge: My dear, dear Abe! How glad I am to see you back! Well, how are you? Did you make good laws?

Lincoln: You will know from the papers what laws are passed. I am responsible for only a little in them; my influence does not yet amount to much. But how about your family?

Mr. Rutledge: All are fine, thank you. But you are looking rather haggard.

Lincoln: I always had more bones and muscles than flesh. Besides I am studying hard, being bound to pass my examination for the admittance to the bar. But Miss Annie is looking fine.

Mr. Rutledge: Yes, our girl looks well, and we know how much we have to thank you for it. Say, Peter and Mary, run off to the meadow, see whether or not the cows are all right!

Children. Yes, father! (Run off.)

Aunt Nancy: Mr. Rutledge, we must see your orchard. Will you kindly take us there! I spoke to the squire about your way of inoculating.

(All leave except Lincoln and Annie.)

Annie: My dear Lincoln, I am really very glad to see you here with us again.

Lincoln: Are you, indeed?

Annie (somewhat embarrassed): That is, you know, there are so many puzzles in my studies that I have to ask you. So it is handier to have you right here. I do not need to write. I may go to the fountain of knowledge directly.

Lincoln: Be not so sure that I am a fountain of knowledge for anything, you know I had little education in childhood, and have to labor hard to make up for this deficiency. But the little I know is at your service. Is there anything that puzzles you just now?

Annie: You know, father often tells us about the ill treatment of slaves in the South. Hearing that, I often get so disgusted that I wish all the slaves might run away. Now, as our constitution and our laws consider them rightful property of their respective owners and running away a crime, is it right for an American girl to wish they might do it?

Lincoln: You might rather wish that a change of sentiment throughout the United States might bring about a change of conditions so that the slaves might become free without doing wrong.

Annie: But now, another thing: Imagine a fugitive slave would come to our house asking for food and shelter, would it be wrong of me to feed him, shelter him, and help him along?

Lincoln: Our constitution demands of us Northern people to deliver fugitive slaves to their rightful owners, and we have to obey the laws. There has never been anything good accomplished by disobedience to laws. If a law does not seem right to us the only way to follow is to influence public sentiment in favor of abolition of a law or a legal condition. I promise you I shall do all I can to help in abolishing this abominable institution. But what influence has a plain backwoodsman?

Annie. You will not remain in rear line. There will be a day when you will be standing in the front. Often when I am thinking of what you have said to me or written in your letters I believe that you will become one of the greatest men this nation has ever had.

Lincoln: Do you think of me then and when?

Annie: The other night I dreamed I saw you standing like a giant stretching out your hand all over the United States, saying with a solemn voice: This land shall be a holy land; it shall not be stained by the gross vices of old decayed nations! There shall be no slavery or any other outrage any more! Liberty and love to all!.

Lincoln: Do you, sometimes, dream of me?

Annie: Yes, my dear Lincoln, my thoughts and even my dreams have been occupied with you the longer, the more. And how could it be otherwise? John McNeil's attitude has brought me near the border of despair, perhaps insanity. Your noble spirit has gently led me back to life. You have freed my soul from despondency and I have no more fervent wish than that I could repay your kindness, that I might do something for you in return.

Lincoln: My dear Annie, the only return I ask is this: Give me the permission—more, the right—more, the duty to render like services to you all my life. To be in such a position would make me the most happy man on earth. My dear friend, two years have passed by us in corresponding with each other, thus studying besides other things our own hearts and minds. Now, are you ready for a lasting comradeship, are you willing to become my wife? I do not ask your first free love; I know you can not give it any more. But give me that love that is left within you. Let us work together for the high ideals we have talked of so often.

Annie: My dear Lincoln, you certainly deserve a better wife than I can be to you. And in the capital, where you are spending most of your time as legislator, you have all the chances to meet young ladies of high culture who will be more qualified for aiding you in the high tasks that are before you.

Lincoln: Don't you know that very often a rude and selfish heart is varnished over with this so-called high culture. All I need is interest in my ideals. You are just the congenial spirit that inspires me and supports me. And now, come, be good, do not delay my happiness any longer. Give me your promise! Be mine!

Annie (Giving him both hands): There, Lincoln, take all that is left of me. With all that is still within me I shall be your faithful wife, and share in all your labors, your troubles, and your joys. There, take me in your big arms, and press me against your noble heart. That shall be my refuge place from now and ever more; there I shall flee from the billows of life's stormy sea.

Lincoln (pressing her against his breast). This heart shall always beat for you, my arms shall work for you, my brain think for you! I do not know of greater happiness than to live for you!

Annie: And how happy am I! This is truly bliss! I was never as happy as now. My former happiness was a restless joy. This is peaceful joy. Near you all that has ever troubled you has vanished, all discords are dissolved in the great harmony of purer love. I feel so safe, the blood flows evenly through my veins, the tingle in my nerves seems to suggest a great holiday.

Lincoln: Our entire life shall be one great, continuous holiday. Our characters are strengthened and cleared by our life's experiences. We have high ideals and no evil tendencies. We love us and our

fellow beings. So there is more than one prognostication for a life without a shadow.

Annie: Now, when does my lord want the wedding to take place? The linen was ready long ago.

Lincoln: If I would rashly follow my sentiment, I would want to have us united as soon as possible. But, you see, I am very poor, as my aim has been to procure knowledge rather than riches. Up to my twenty-second year I worked for my father, having very little opportunity for schooling. Since I have been here in New Salem I have devoted all my spare time to the acquisition of knowledge. Since I have been a member of the legislature I have assiduously studied law. In a few months I shall have finished this study; then I shall build up a practice and build a home for us two. Then nothing on God's footstool shall keep us apart!

Annie: I am almost afraid to live apart from you for a while. The peace of mind that emerges from you may leave me some time. But I will tell you what I may do meanwhile. I'll go to the Jacksonville Academy, where my brother is studying, and there preparing me for the task of being a great lawyer's wife.

Lincoln: Do that, my Annie! You and I shall not know anything of a dead level of attainment in our life. Always onward with the great evolution of the universe towards perfection our aim shall be to be more and more qualified for working for our fellow beings. You and I know that there is very little satisfaction in a narrow life for oneself, but that there is all the bliss in a broad-minded working with and for the great evolution. These high aims will unite us when our bodies be old and bended, our love ennobled by them will last forever.

Annie: My dear strong Lincoln; my noble man, God bless you!

FOURTH ACT.

Place: Lincoln's law office in Vandalia; furnished very plainly; fire in the fireplace; law books on a big table. Lincoln in sitting position, then rises, paces the room, and begins this soliloquy:

Lincoln: Our life is like a journey up hill with stations marking our attainments. I have reached several stations since the time I split rails for my father's fence. Now, having attained my admission to the bar, my next aim shall be to build up a practice large enough to support my dear Annie and myself; then having built a nest for us, I shall assign the date for our wedding day. Then the summit of my life will have been reached. I shall then be on top of the hill. There will be nothing more to wish for——

——I wonder why it is that she did not write for the last two weeks? Has her health failed again? Could I be near her, all the time, she would be well, and I should not be worrying. (Knocking outside.) Hark! Somebody is knocking. The long desired client, perhaps! Come in!

(Mr. Smith, a young farmhand, enters.)

Smith: How do you do? Is this the new lawyer, Lincoln?

Lincoln: My name is Lincoln, and I am a lawyer.

Smith (slyly): Well, I have a job for you. There will be some money to be earned—money, that's what the lawyers are after, aren't they?

Lincoln: What do you want?

Smith: Well, you know, I want to revenge myself on my brother. He insulted me; he called me a lazy dog. He is always criticising me, thinking himself a lot, because he's the oldest, and father is dead. But I am of age, and am going to show him that I can do something; if nothing more, make him lose some money; that will make him wise; he'll leave me alone after this.

Lincoln: Perhaps your brother had some reasons for criticising you, and he most likely meant it well in trying to correct you.

Smith: That's nothing of your business, lawyer. Just listen to my case! Last winter I stayed with him and helped him doing chores. He did not pay me a cent for this. Neither expected to pay any. But I will sue him. I'll make him pay. He'll be surprised when I send him a bill through a lawyer, for five months' wages. Isn't that a good joke?

Lincoln: I am a lover of a good joke; but in this I see only something that saddens my heart. Now answer: Did your brother hire you for the chores?

Smith: No. You see, I was out of work, and having no other place to go, it was the most natural thing for me to go to the old homestead which my brother owns now; and being there, I, of course, helped him.

Lincoln: Your brother opened his house for you as a refuge, and you want to play such a dirty trick on him, just because you feel hurt by his good admonitions, which were meant as a benefit to you. And you want me to help you in this. No, my boy; I shall never lend my hand to bad deals like that.

Smith: What is that to you, as long as you can make some money by this? I shall pay you well; lawyers are after the money. That's what they have always told me.

Lincoln: You are not rightly informed. Our main aim is not to get money, but to help administer justice. We want to assist everybody to get what belongs to him. We stand for everything that is right. And you expect me to assist you in what is wrong? Get out of here!

Smith (leaving the room): Then be damned! I'll find somebody that will take my case!

Lincoln (calling after him): One word, my man.

Smith (coming back slowly): Well, what do you want?

Lincoln: Come, my boy, do not proceed in this any further. Go home to your brother, and consider whether or not your brother is really your best friend, and not those that have incited you to evil revenge. Do not shut your brother's door against you; there may be other days when you will need a home! Do not mean to reap anything good from sowing evil! Sow love that you may harvest love always! Be a good boy and settle this in peace. Mind, it is your own brother!

Smith (accepting Lincoln's outstretched hand): You may be right! Thank you! Good-bye! (Leaves.)

Lincoln (alone): I shall rather die poor than get rich by advocating evil! My Annie thinks the same way. She would not like to have her wedding day hastened by unjust means.

(Somebody knocks.) Come in!

S. Miller: Are you Mr. Lincoln?

• **Lincoln:** I am; what can I do for you?

S. Miller: My name is Miller. I own a saw-mill, and had some trouble with one of my workers. Though I have given strict orders to all my workers to be careful, he was careless, and stuck his

fingers where he should not have put them. He reaped the natural result from his carelessness—four fingers were taken off by the machine. Now he wants five hundred dollars damages. It would be bad policy to reward his disobedience with five hundred dollars. My, that would be a stimulus for others to be careless, or perhaps stick their fingers in wantonly; five hundred dollars is a great sum for those poor devils. They would give more than four fingers for such an amount of money. So I want to hire you as my lawyer in this litigation to have this nonsense stopped and have it made clear beyond all doubt that Miller is not the man to reward carelessness with five hundred dollars.

Lincoln: I think I rather do not take your case. My sympathy goes to the poor man who became a cripple in trying to earn his daily bread.

S. Miller. You seem to be an inexperienced lawyer—to side with the man who has no money to pay you. You are utterly wrong; your side should always be with those who pay the most. You might be foolish enough to take the side of the man, if he would offer his case, though you would never get a cent, as I have the money and am going to fight this up to the Supreme Court.

Lincoln: Certainly, I would take his side. The poor, honest workers give their life, their whole attention, energy and effort into the output of useful work. And now, that a laborer has, for a moment, forgotten the constant danger that surrounds him, lost his attention, for a second, dulled by the daily grind, and the machine has taken his fingers, you want me to help you dodge the responsibility, to get out of the necessity of paying the poor cripple a small sum with which to begin a new existence. No, sir, I would not do it for all the money in the world.

Miller: You must be pretty rich to be so independent!

Lincoln: My dear sir, let me tell you that I am in need of money more than ever before; I am sorely in need of it. But my conscience and my honor can never be bought. I shall never be a man rich in money, if I can only be rich in love, and in the respect of my countrymen!

Miller: You seem to be one of those infernal, unpractical dreamers. I mistook you for a shrewd lawyer. But having found what you are, I do not want your service. (Goes.)

Lincoln (meditatively): That would not have been in Annie's spirit. We both pledged ourselves for justice and love to all. (With outstretched arms) Oh, Annie, my dear girl, how I long for you!

(Somebody knocks.) Come in!

(In comes Squire Green, with sad countenance.)

Welcome, Squire Green. What is it that brings you here? I am glad to see you in my new office. But, why so sad? You do not bring anything sad?

Green: My dear boy, I have to bring you bad news. I hope you can bear them like a man. Be strong!

Lincoln: What is it? Annie is not sick again?

Green: You know, she has really never quite overcome the shock she received when John Mc Neil left her. Her spirits revived for a while. She seemed well and happy. But that was not strong enough to last. We believed in her recovery; she herself did. But her vitality had suffered fatally, her heart had been broken. And now she died. My dear Abraham, Annie is dead.

Lincoln: Annie dead! That cannot be! Her heart broken, you say; her heart that loved me so and was loved by me! That cannot be! How could that be possible? (Buries his face in his hands.)

Green: See, my dear friend, with a girl's heart it is as with a flower. If the frost has gone to the roots, a new sun may bring forth life for only a little while; it cannot last. The more complete Annie opened her heart to her first lover, the more complete was the ruin of her young life. The sun of your love could produce a short spring of happiness, but it could not completely restore the vigor of her inner life. As long as you were with her she was well; but when you had gone her overstrung nerves made her more and more a victim of despondency. As John McNeil's last letter had been in vague terms, she—in her nervous state—accused herself of faithlessness. Finally she passed away as a light that extinguishes when its nourishment is gone.

Lincoln: I cannot bear it!

Green (after a pause): My dear boy, I know it is hard. But Time, the great healer, will heal this wound. Annie spoke only of you in her last hour. She asked me to bring to you her thanks for all you have been to her. And now, farewell! I shall leave you, for I know you will find the balance of your mind better left all to yourself alone. Remember, while she is gone from us, her pure spirit will abide with us. We shall not only remember the noble thoughts she uttered, but the very atmosphere of her great soul will remain with us. Good-bye, my boy, good-bye!

Lincoln: Good-bye, my dear Green.

(Lincoln paces up and down the room, then sits down before the fire, stares into the glow, then springs up again.)

Lincoln: Annie dead! My happiness, the object of all my plans and works is gone. What is life to me after this has happened? I wish I also was in a grave!—In a grave—? is she in a grave, this lovely girl; in the gloomy grave! This tender form enclosed in a tomb, covered with earth! Hark, the

wind is howling! And Annie is all alone in the cemetery, all alone in that wind! She was once alone in a storm. Oh, how can I bear to leave her alone in the storm!

(At once he beholds an apparition in one corner of the room, resembling the form of his deceased bride.)

Lincoln: What is that!—Is that your spirit Annie? Speak to me, if spirits can speak!

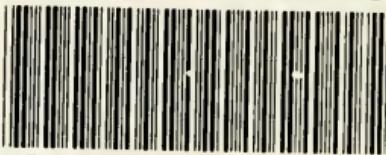
Annie's Spirit: Abraham Lincoln, do not despond on my account; do not even mourn for me! A union with me was not your destiny. Your existence shall not be wrapped up in me. You have a greater task that shall fill your whole life. The summit of your uphill march is not a love feast with a single human being, but a love feast with your entire nation. Your big heart shall belong to all! You shall embrace millions! This great love will cost you your own life, but you shall not have lived and died in vain. All coming generations will gratefully remember you and your noble life's work. This grief that pains you now is good for you. It will tear you from anything that is small and drive you to do the greatest. Have thanks for all your selfless love, now turn your heart from me to all men, old and young, poor and rich, black and white. Care for justice for all. Good-bye, my Lincoln.

(Apparition disappears.)

Lincoln (standing erect, his hands outstretched as to the place where the apparition disappeared): My Annie, you have gone from me, but your spirit shall not leave me, and kindle me to great, noble deeds. It shall be as you say: My heart shall belong to all. I pledge myself to do justice and love to all, malice to none.



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